

CLAIMS

1. A glazing unit (1) comprising at least one marking
5 element (14) visible from the outside thereof and
consisting of a string of characters (15),
characterized in that the marking element (14) can be
visually identified by whomsoever and is intended to be
communicated remotely to identification means (40),
10 said identification means incorporating, for a given
marking element, characteristics relating to the
glazing unit which are intended to be at least partly
accessible to the public in exchange for the identity
of the marking element.
15
2. The glazing unit as claimed in claim 1,
characterized in that the string of characters is a
combination of numerals and/or of letters or of
pictorial symbols.
20
3. The glazing unit as claimed in claim 1 or 2,
characterized in that the marking element is intended
to be recognized by recognition means, such as
character-recognition reader equipment.
25
4. The glazing unit as claimed in claims 1 to 3,
characterized in that the marking element (14) is
communicated to the identification means by appropriate
technical communications means.
30
5. The glazing unit as claimed in one of claims 1 to
4, characterized in that the identification means (40)
consist of a database in which all the characteristics
relating to the glazing unit are recorded in the form
35 of a string of numbers, termed the identifier, each
number being coded on one or more successive characters
of the marking element.

6. The glazing unit as claimed in claim 4, characterized in that the characters of the marking element are a numeric or alphanumeric or binary or decimal or alternatively hexadecimal coding of a number
5 in the identifier.

7. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the marking element (14) or the identifier in the identification
10 means (40) remains unchanged while the corresponding characteristics associated with the glazing unit can be altered.

8. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the marking
15 element is affixed in perpetuity to the glazing unit, in particular is secured to a part of the glazing unit that is inaccessible from the outside.

20 9. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it comprises the same marking element (14) arranged at several points on the glazing unit.

25 10. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the marking element (14) identifies the technical characteristics that make up the glazing unit, the characteristics relating to its manufacture, the commercial
30 characteristics and those associated with its destination.

11. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the marking
35 element (14) identifies at least one of the following characteristics:

- the commercial name of the glazing unit, and/or the family of glazing unit, and/or the type of glazing unit;

- the composition of the glass in the glazing unit and/or the technical characteristics afforded by the thin layers deposited on the glazing unit;
- the dimensions of the glazing unit;
- 5 - the place of manufacture of the glazing unit and/or the date of manufacture of the glazing unit;
- the first customer of the glazing unit;
- information associated with the first use of the glazing unit;
- 10 - the type of certification and/or of standards that the glazing unit meets;
- pecuniary information associated with the glazing unit.

15 12. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it is an insulating unit and comprises at least two sheets of glass (10, 11) and at least one gas-filled cavity (12) separating the two sheets of glass, the spacing of the
20 two sheets of glass being achieved by at least one interlayer (13), and in that the marking element (14) is arranged on the interlayer (13) and more particularly on the face (13a) facing the gas-filled cavity.

25 13. The glazing unit as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the marking element (14) identifies the characteristics of the gas-filled cavity, particularly its thickness, and its
30 composition, and/or identifies the technical characteristics of the interlayer.

14. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the marking
35 element (14) is engraved or printed onto an element that makes up the glazing unit.

15. The glazing unit as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it is laminated

and comprises at least two sheets of glass and a plastic interlayer arranged between the two sheets of glass, the marking element (14) being affixed to the plastic interlayer.

5

16. A method for identifying a glazing unit (1) comprising at least one marking element (14) visible from the outside of this glazing unit and intended to be visually identifiable by whomsoever, the method
10 consisting in recognizing the marking element, characterized in that, after recognition, the method consists in transmitting the content of the marking element to identification means (40) which identify it with an item of information, and in passing on at least
15 some of this information publicly.

17. The method as claimed in claim 16, characterized in that the recognition of the marking element is performed by visual reading or electronic reading.

20

18. The method as claimed in claim 16 or 17, characterized in that the transmission of the content of the marking element to the identification means (40) is performed by mail or by telephone, or by telefax or
25 by electronic communications means such as the Internet.

19. The method as claimed in any one of claims 16 to 18, characterized in that the passing-on of the
30 information consists in listing the data provided publicly, verbally by telephone, in writing by mail, or by telefax, or by sending a message by telephone or Internet, or by displaying on an Internet site, or alternatively by displaying on any display screen
35 connected to a communications network.

20. A system for identifying a glazing unit (1) using a marking element (14) affixed to the glazing unit and able to be identified from outside the glazing unit,

characterized in that it comprises transmission means (22) for transmitting the recognition of the marking element to identification means, identification means (40) which receive the marking element, the said
5 marking element corresponding to information intended to be rendered at least partially public, and forwarding means (32) for passing on the information corresponding to the marking element from the identification means (40) to reception means (50).

10

21. The identification system as claimed in claim 20, characterized in that, with the marking element visible from outside the glazing unit, the system comprises recognition means (21) for recognizing the marking
15 element able to read the marking element, such as a reader device of the character recognition equipment type.

22. The system for identifying a glazing unit as
20 claimed in claim 20 or 21, characterized in that it comprises at least one filter (41) associated with the identification means (40) so as to pass on only some of the information corresponding to the marking element.

23. The system for identifying a glazing unit as
25 claimed in one of claims 20 to 22, characterized in that the transmission means (22) and the forwarding means (32) are mail or telephone, or telefax, or electronic communications means of the Internet type.

30

24. The system for identifying a glazing unit as claimed in one of claims 20 to 23, characterized in that the reception means (50) are a recording or viewing device.

35

25. A method for identifying the glazing unit as claimed in one of claims 16 to 19 or system for identifying a glazing unit as claimed in one of claims 20 to 24, characterized in that the information

corresponding to a marking element and contained in the identification means (40) includes the technical characteristics that make up the glazing unit, the characteristics relating to its manufacture, the commercial characteristics and those associated with its destination.

26. The method for identifying the glazing unit as claimed in one of claims 16 to 19 or system for identifying a glazing unit as claimed in one of claims 20 to 24, characterized in that the information is recorded in a computer-oriented manner in the form of a string of numbers, termed the identifier, each number being coded on one or more successive characters of the marking element.

27. The method for identifying the glazing unit or system for identifying a glazing unit as claimed in claim 26, characterized in that the marking element is a string of characters which corresponds to a numeric or alphanumeric or binary or decimal or alternatively hexadecimal coding of a number in the identifier.